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ABSTRACT

Four papers address cultural issues related to the involvement of limited-English-proficient parents in public schools in the United States. "Cultural Issues in Indochinese Parent Involvement" (Bach-Tuyet (Pham) Tran) outlines the linguistic, social, and practical barriers to Indochinese immigrant parent involvement and makes suggestions for changing that situation. "Parental Involvement: Building on Overseas Initiatives" (J. Patrick Redding) examines the ways in which U.S. pre-immigration programs are building potential and expectations for participation in the schools among parents. "Cross-Cultural Policy Issues in Minority and Majority Parent Involvement" (Virginia P. Collier) reviews a variety of concerns related to majority and language-minority parent involvement in general, parent advocacy in bilingual education, parents as teachers' aides and on advisory councils, parent leadership training institutes, parent education, and integrated majority-minority parent involvement. "Why Parent Tutors? Cultural Reasons" (Jose Oliva) gives reasons for training Hispanic parents to be tutors for their children, illustrated with experiences from Family English Literacy programs in five New Jersey communities. A response to the presentations by two specialists is also summarized. (MSE)

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Cross-Cultural Policy Issues in Minority and Majority Parent Involvement	Virginia P. Collier
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CULTURAL ISSUES IN INDOCHINESE PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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Today while public schools across the nation are experiencing an increase in their Indochinese student enrollment, Indochinese parents continue to have little, if any, involvement in school activities. This issue has become a major concern to most school officials and administrators. Methods to attract parents to actively participate in their children's educational development via school activities have been seriously assessed.

Several reasons appear to contribute to parents' non-involvement.

Language barrier. This is one of the major reasons for Indochinese parents not to participate in school activities. Many of them do not have adequate English proficiency to understand what goes on in PTA meetings.

Lack of transportation. Many low-income Indochinese families rely heavily on public transportation which generally slows down considerably during the evening hours and weekends when most extra curricular activities take place.

Economic reasons. Many Indochinese parents hold menial jobs and work odd hours. Holding two jobs at the same time is frequently an economic necessity to support large and extended families. School activities usually occur at hours that are inconvenient for them. After long working hours these parents have a little time left which is then taken up with grocery shopping, cooking, and other family responsibilities.

Alien to the American education system. Like the French, who have had a heavy influence on the Indochinese people, and other nationalities, the Indochinese come from a culture where education and school organization are under the aegis of government authorities. Parents as well as students have little to say about these matters. However, this does not mean that parents regard their children's education as unimportant. On the contrary, Indochinese students are working very hard and performing well in the American school system, thanks to a long tradition of family discipline instilled in their homes.

In Vietnam, PTA meetings are non-existent, although there are parents' associations. The function of these associations is more concerned with social activities such as raising funds for poor students.

How can the public school system attract and encourage Indochinese parents to become involved in school activities? I would like to suggest the following criteria which may lead to greater parent participation.

Bilingual staff. A bilingual career/guidance counselor should be hired and charged with assisting Indochinese students with academic and social activities. The counselor could serve as a liaison between the school administration and parents. In most schools in the Washington metropolitan area with a concentration of Indochinese students, a bilingual program with a small bilingual staff has been established. This staff focuses more on academic activities than on extra curricular activities or parent-school relations. In Montgomery County, Maryland, over 1300 Indochinese students represent approximately 14.6% of school enrollment. There is only one funded part-time bilingual teacher specialist to

work both with students on subject matters and parents on extra curricular school activities. It is absolutely necessary for each school district to establish an adequate bilingual staff in order to provide foreign-born students with tutoring and career counseling, and to work with their parents on extra curricular activities.

Needs survey. In the planning process of any project the school administration should conduct a survey by sending its bilingual staff out to meet with parents to inquire about the best schedules and locations for meetings, problems which need be discussed at meetings, their opinions on major issues, etc. It is worth to noting that most Asians remain quiet in "non native language" public meetings. They would feel more comfortable expressing themselves in private individual meetings.

Indirect approach. Most Asians are easily intimidated by the American business-like direct approach. They prefer to socialize and build trust first before doing business wih a stranger. Personal contacts and a type of gathering should precede business meetings.

"Imperative" invitation. In American society, life is usually better organized and more secure than in many other countries, especially those countries that have been at war for decades. Accordingly, daily life seems to be carried on more easily here, and community members participate actively and voluntarily in community activities. In addition, American people have a stronger sense of freedom and democracy. This is reflected in the wording used by public school requests for parent participation. But to Indochinese parents, school invitations must carry an authoritative command that makes them feel obligated to attend or participate in such activity for the benefit of their children.

Follow-up. This is an absolute "must" for the success of any program. Most school invitations or announcements are sent out to parents and no follow-up is done because no bilingual staff is available. Invitations of this type usually receive no response from Indochinese parents perhaps because of lack interest, pressures of jobs and survival, or lack of English proficiency. In some cases, parents are illiterate in their own native language or, they may be of Chinese origin and cannot read Vietnamese, Khmer or Laotian. In these instances, personal contacts or visits prove to be the best way to communicate with Indochinese parents.

Cooperation with Parents Associations. One of the most effective ways to encourage Indochinese parents to become involved in school activities when bilingual staff is limited, is to work closely with local parents associations. The school administration can initiate a program and do all the planning for it, then let local parents associations carry it out. These associations can motivate community members to participate in school activities and they seem to understand their needs and concerns better. Their input can be helpful to any school administration. The Teacher Corps-Cycle Eleven of Arlington, Virginia, is one of the best examples of the successful cooperation that can exist between school districts and community organizations.

Indochinese refugees seem to require much longer periods of time to adjust themselves to their new homeland than other immigrants. Their slow adjustment is due to the immense cultural differences between American culture and their own, and the trauma they experience before reaching this new and promised land. Integrating them into the mainstream, including participation in the schools, requires an extra measure of planning and patience.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT: BUILDING ON OVERSEAS INITIATIVES

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How do we increase the involvement of parents of our limited-English proficient (LEP) students in school affairs, especially if the parents are themselves LEP? This is a concern that many of us share, and one that is being addressed in many locations. One such location is far from American communities and schools. This process of encouraging involvement is a part of the pre-arrival training program for U.S.-bound Southeast Asian refugees being conducted in Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. This paper briefly describes the pre-arrival program, and more specifically, the efforts aimed at encouraging parental involvement in school affairs. A second title to this paper might well be entitled "Building on Overseas Expectations," for these overseas initiatives are probably creating among parents certain expectations--intentionally or otherwise--regarding their anticipated involvement with the schools. The paper concludes with a brief discussion about what these expectations might be.

The Overseas Training Program. In the fall of 1980, the Bureau for Refugee Programs of the U.S. Department of State launched what has become the largest residential language and cultural orientation training program in the world. The Intensive English as a Second Language and Cultural Orientation (IESL/CO) Program prepares Southeast Asian refugees for successful resettlement and self-sufficiency in their new communities in the United States. By mid-1986, the program, which provides instruction to refugees ages 13-55 from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, had graduated nearly 170,000 students.

Although the training sites in Southeast Asia are located in different countries with different physical environments and are operated by a number of different agencies, the program specifications, essential program goals, and curriculum objectives are consistent from one site to another.

Until the middle of 1985 the program was aimed only at adults ages 16-55. Program objectives in the 20-week course focused on English language, cultural orientation, and work orientation training. Specific objectives relating to parental responsibilities regarding the schooling of children were included from the very start. The content of these objectives focused on enrollment procedures, mandatory attendance, and teacher-parent meetings, among others.

There were several reasons for including such objectives within the program. Approximately half of the adults receiving training were illiterate in English. Many of them had little or no formal schooling. Furthermore, common school practices in the societies they had left differed from what they could expect in the U.S. In sum, their previous experience and lack of English language facility would make them prime candidates for "non-involvement" with the public school once they arrived. One part of the pre-arrival training program was aimed at encouraging parents to do otherwise.

Such training took on greater meaning in mid-1985 with the inception of a new component of the pre-arrival training program known as PASS, Preparation for American Secondary Schools.

The Pass Component.* PASS is geared toward 13 to 16-year-olds who will most likely spend a significant portion of their time in public schools following their arrival in the U.S.

The PASS component is designed to replicate, to the degree possible, the learning environment found in the U.S. public secondary school. Classes are held five days a week for a 20-week period. Curriculum content focuses on ESL, American Studies, and mathematics. The school is staffed by a principal, vice-principal, social worker, guidance counselors, extra-curricular activities supervisors, education specialists, and teachers.

At the PASS site in the Philippines, the school day consists of six 45-minute class segments: three devoted to ESL, two to American Studies, and the last to mathematics. Friday's classes are shorter, to permit a seventh period which is devoted to extra-curricular activities, e.g., sports, clubs, singing groups.

While the American Studies classes are augmented by having trained interpreters in the classroom, the ESL and mathematics classes are taught entirely in English. This allows Vietnamese, Khmer and Lao youth to be placed together.

One opportunity which presented itself when PASS began was to take what had been previously discussed in the adult program in the abstract regarding parental involvement, and put it into a real and meaningful context. The effort to involve the PASS students' parents or guardians, who are themselves students in the adult program, became an important feature of PASS. Now a special orientation meeting at the start of each new training cycle provides parents with information about the program, lets them know that report cards will be sent home after 10 weeks and responds to any questions or concerns that parents might have. Parents are also encouraged to return to the school and meet with PASS faculty. A school social worker visits the camp neighborhoods to talk to parents and students.

One of the results of this overall training effort is to establish a set of expectations on the part of parents regarding interaction with schools in U.S. communities. Not all of these expectations have resulted from corresponding training objectives. Parents are learning about the process of schooling from the inside. As program participants, what they are being told is tested against what they actually observe. Moreover, facets of the "hidden curriculum" are also contributing to certain expectations. If we are to work effectively with the parents of our LEP students, then we need to be aware of what some of these expectations might be.

Some Pre-Arrival Expectations. Some of the general expectations that Southeast Asian refugee parents have concerning their interaction with the public schools may be described as follows:

The expectation of involvement. Parents know they can and should be involved with their child's education. It is sometimes easy for educators to dismiss the lack of parental involvement based on the fact that such behavior is "typical" in Southeast Asian cultures. That may be. But refugee parents are not

*A more detailed description of PASS is provided at the end of this report.

"typical" people. They are survivors and excellent learners. They have been told that involvement is expected, and they have experienced such involvement through the pre-arrival training program. If there is a lack of involvement, it is quite possibly related to the next expectation.

The expectation of who will initiate involvement. The overall goal of the pre-arrival training program is to promote self-sufficiency in the U.S. Adults are provided English language training, and provided basic knowledge and skills in cultural and work orientation classes. Yet all of this is happening in a very controlled environment--a refugee camp. This environment represents a social system which demands its own patterns of behaviors, and fosters its own attitudes and feelings. Individuals are told where they will stay, how food distribution will occur, what they must do with most of their time, when to report for class, and so on. Efforts to get parents involved in the PASS activities of their children are similarly commanded. So, while parental involvement is the norm, it is also true that such activity has been well planned and structured by training staff. In other words, it is an activity initiated by the staff, not the parents themselves. There follows, then, in many cases, an expectation that the institution (the school) will initiate the contact and facilitate the involvement.

Moreover, once these newest of Americans reach our shores, they will begin the long process of adjusting to our culture. In doing such, the lack of self-initiated involvement or participation in new institutions during the early stages of adjustment should not be surprising. One observer of cultural adjustment, S.N. Eisenstadt (1954), sees the following four stages in the nature of the adjustment process:

- acquisition of language, norms, roles, and customs
- learning of new roles to meet new situations
- development of new identity and status-image
- movement from participation in the institutions of the ethnic group to participation in the institutions of the new society/culture.

Hence, fully self-initiated involvement or participation in institutions like the schools will come only after the newly arriving refugees have been in the U.S. for some time. The expectation they carry for the short term is that school officials will initiate and facilitate their involvement.

The "expectation" of the fallibility of teachers. Program participants do not leave Southeast Asia expecting that teachers are fallible. Rather, they recognize that they can be. This needs to be emphasized because many of us still persist in thinking that the cultural inheritance of Southeast Asians prohibits them from viewing the teachers of their children with anything less than a high degree of respect or even awe. Outward behavior suggests such respect, but it often masks a healthy dose of skepticism about the capabilities of the individual teacher who might be working with their children.

In a study (Redding, 1984), conducted in Southeast Asia, Lao refugees were asked to rate on a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree the following statement:

"A teacher's word should not be corrected."

Twenty-three of thirty-six respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. The reasons generally given were summed up well by one 53-year-old, ex-soldier, who was illiterate in English.

> [A teacher] is just an ordinary human being like us. What is different about him is that he already finished his studies. But then even if he is a teacher he also commits mistakes because people are not perfect in everything. Even animals with four legs can slip, and . . . surgeons make mistakes. It is not right if we don't correct the teacher [if] what he explains to us is not all correct and we know it. Since the teacher is not perfect, if we don't correct him, there will be the bad effect not only on us but many other students as well.

The point to be made here is that parental silence or lack of involvement is not necessarily a signal of approval regarding school affairs. The parents of our LEP students are likely to have as many concerns as are found among other parent groups. Interactions with school officials should allow these concerns to emerge.

The expectation that schools will foster the rapid acculturation of children. When older individuals are faced with the necessity of adjusting to a new culture, it can often be a difficult process. The knowledge, skills, and attitudes they carry from their native cultures is "baggage" that is functional or non-functional in varying degrees in the new environment. That is less so for the young, and their quick adaptation may be both a source of envy and fear among elders. Thus the greatest concern among many parents is that their children will lose their cultural inheritance by becoming all too quickly "Americanized."

Parents know that it will be in the schools that these changes are fostered. Indeed, this is one of the major functions of the schools of any society--to socialize its citizens. Southeast Asian refugee parents are well aware of this. For our part, we should be aware of how threatening that may be for these parents.

There is, however, another side to this expectation. While parents fear the rapid "Americanization" of their children, they also realize that this change is inevitable. Moreover, parents realize that their children's ability to adapt more quickly can be a valuable resource. In the same survey of Lao adult students mentioned earlier, nearly 90% of the respondents felt that they had much to learn from their children--a beneficial predisposition for families about to resettle in a strange land.

Parents, therefore, may see schools as both a source of fear and promise in regard to the acculturation of their children. But whether they see it one way, or the other, or both, it is bound to be an important dynamic affecting their own interaction with the schools.

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Preparing Refugee Youth For American Secondary Schools
The PASS Program

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In 1980, the United States Department of State began sponsoring English language and orientation programs in refugee camps in Southeast Asia. These programs provide training for adult refugees, ages 16-55, from Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia who will be resettled in the U.S. Until recently, however, adolescents among the refugee population were not included in the Overseas Training Program. They arrived in the U.S. without the previous exposure to formal English language training and the introduction to American culture that adult refugees received. Often lacking any previous schooling, the teenagers arrived in the U.S. unfamiliar with school procedures and appropriate social behaviors and were sometimes well behind their American peers in academic achievement.

An important new program, called Preparation for American Secondary Schools (PASS), began recently in the refugee training centers in Thailand and the Philippines. The goal of the PASS program is to prepare 13-16 year-olds for American secondary schools. The 20-week curriculum emphasizes language, math skills, and cultural orientation. In addition, students develop cross-cultural, interpersonal, and coping skills that will ease their transition to American life and, specifically, to American schools.

PREPARATION FOR PASS

Preparation for the PASS Program began in January 1985 with a planning conference in Washington, D. C. Leaders in the field of refugee youth education and representatives from the voluntary agencies and Indochinese Mutual Assistance Associations met with staff of the implementing agencies (The Consortium: composed of The Experiment in International Living, Save the Children and World Education; the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC); and the Center for Applied Linguistics) to identify the essential elements that the curriculum should include. Following the conference, representatives from the Overseas Refugee Training Program visited schools across the country to talk with teachers and counselors about the specific academic, social, and cultural problems that refugee adolescents face. The U.S. educators thought it was important to focus on developing language skills, interaction and interpersonal skills, and basic school skills such as how to work independently, take a test, or participate in class. Through the exposure to these skills it was hoped that the adolescents would develop the self-confidence needed to adjust to the American school system. Many schools provided samples of their ESL curricula and other teaching materials.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Based on the recommendations from the U.S. educators and the experience of teachers in the overseas program, a program design and curriculum framework were developed. Pilot classes began in April 1985 in the Phanat Nikhom Refugee Camp, Thailand and in September 1985 at the Philippines Refugee Processing Center, Bataan, the Philippines. Students attend class between four and five hours daily for 20 weeks. There are six 40-minutes periods per day, including three periods of ESL, one period of Basic Math, and two periods of American Studies. The curriculum attempts to integrate language skills and academic concepts.

The ESL curriculum includes survival oral competence, grammar, and the learning of ESL through content material. Equal emphasis is placed on the development of reading, writing, listening comprehension, and conversation skills.

The math curriculum exposes students to basic computational and problem-solving skills and emphasizes the language of mathematical operations.

The American Studies portion of the curriculum includes survival competencies found in the adult curriculum. It also focuses on the values and skills teenagers need in order to fit comfortably in an U.S. high school. Topics in ESL and American Studies complement and reinforce each other.

Over the 20-week period, various activities are designed to expose students to common school experiences such as extra-curricular activities, eating in a cafeteria, going to the library, going to homeroom and taking electives. Other ways in which the program imitates an American school are by requiring students to do homework, take tests, change classes at the sound of a bell, carry hall passes, and interpret report cards.

Parents are also involved in their children's education. They attend parent-teacher conferences, they read and sign notes sent from school, and in the case of discipline problems, the parents may be asked to see a counselor or the principal.

EVALUATION

The PASS program hopes to graduate students who will reach the U.S. with the confidence and flexibility to adjust and succeed in an American high school. There should still be the expectation that these students will have some problems, but they will arrive equipped with more knowledge about school and the U.S., and more skills to cope with changes than previous refugee youth. As students graduate from the program and begin to resettle in the U.S., the overseas program would appreciate any comments and advice from service providers who work with graduates of the PASS program.

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CROSS-CULTURAL POLICY ISSUES IN MINORITY AND MAJORITY PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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Parent involvement in public schools in the United States has always been an unresolved issue. School staff frequently bemoan the lack of parent involvement in schools. Usually teachers want parents to attend parent-teacher conferences, to volunteer for assistance such as accompanying students on field trips or preparing food for fund-raising projects, to help their children with homework, and to ensure that their children attend school regularly. However, perceptions of school staff of parent involvement, and parental perceptions may conflict considerably when issues of control of the school surface. The fact is that in U.S. public schools, parents have little or no decision-making power.

Many experiments with community control of schools have come and gone. One example was Barbara Sizemore's short-lived PACTS plan for the District of Columbia Public Schools, in the early 1970s. Parents, administrators, community members, teachers, and students (PACTS) formed decision-making councils to govern the schools. All five groups could have an equal voice. Parents were very vocal, and professional educators felt the system was chaotic. The experiment ended in less than one year. Similar stories could be described for many of the urban school systems. D.B. Tyack, an educational historian, describes this conflict over power and school control issues as a continual pattern within urban U.S. public schools in the twentieth century, with educational personnel generally winning most of the battles for centralization, standardization of curricula, and institutionalization of what he calls "the one best system." These battles were won by educators at the expense of all the diverse community interests (Tyack, 1974).

Today we seem to be in an era which includes an unusual mixture of relative toleration of cultural pluralism while dominated by conservative policies on the national scene, which in turn influences what are generally conservative school board policies. School boards and school personnel are concerned about improving minority achievement but are uncertain what to do to bring about changes. School personnel want minority parents to be more involved in schools because they feel that ultimately parent involvement will improve minority achievement. But the tension is not easily resolved between professional educators' perceptions of the role of parents in schools and parents' expectations of what their role should be--between simple parental support of school policies with home reinforcement of school skills, versus parents as advocates and change agents at the decision-making level.

Majority Parents. Cross-cultural concerns related to this tension are endless. Majority parents have greater access to the possibility of participating in school decision-making. Majority parents are largely of middle-class background. They have more control over political and economic resources than minority parents. The school program is designed to serve the needs of majority children. Their first language is standard English, the prestigious language of the society, with institutional support. Majority parents' language and cultural identity is developed and maintained at school (Dolson, 1985).

Language-Minority Parents. In contrast, language-minority parents are a diverse group with diverse needs. Large numbers of language-minority parents

come from a working-class background, yet most have aspirations to middle-class status. There are immigrant minorities who have moved more or less voluntarily to the U.S. for economic, social, or political reasons. There are indigenous minorities who have become incorporated involuntarily into U.S. society through slavery (Afro-Americans), conquest (Native Americans, Mexican-Americans), or colonization (Puerto Ricans, Native Hawaiians) (Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi, 1986). There are language-minority parents of every conceivable language and cultural background, including great variety in educational background, social class, and experience. They come from rural and urban settings, as well as technological, industrial, or pre-industrial societies. There are also many language-minority students without parents, in this case the unaccompanied minors who come from war-torn countries.

In contrast to majority parents, language-minority parents have much less access to control of resources. They may not yet be proficient in English, the language they need for access to resources and potential influence in school decision-making. Their first language is a subordinate language which is undervalued in the U.S. and has little institutional support (Dolson, 1985). They may feel strongly that their children are acquiring unacceptable and immoral values at school (Bui Duc Ton, 1978). They may want to take an active role in directing their children's educational development or they may prefer to rely on the authority of school personnel to decide what is best for their children. Most of all, language-minority parents want their children to succeed academically and yet some are aware that some minorities continue to experience persistent disproportionate school failure (Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi, 1986). They want to change this pattern. Some preliterate parents feel the most powerless of all.

Given this enormous range of diversity among parents, both majority and minority, how can we develop an appropriate model for cross-cultural parent involvement in U.S. schools? Egalitarian principles tell us that we can aspire to encourage participation of all citizens in the total life of the society. Although we do not always provide easy access to participation, linking the life of the school with that of the community in all its diversity is one means of helping all parents achieve a stronger sense of ownership in the education of their children.

Parent Advocacy in Bilingual Education. Probably the most dramatic attempts at increased language-minority parent participation have occurred in the development of bilingual education programs in the U.S. Creating a curriculum which has a closer link to community language and cultural patterns would seem a natural context for greater minority parent access to schools. Yet there have been many struggles and hundreds of unresolved issues remain.

Some bilingual programs were initiated through language-minority parents' advocacy, lobbying, and planning efforts, such as those in Dade County, Florida (Mackey and Beebe, 1977); Boston, Massachusetts (Ambert and Melendez, 1985); Los Angeles, California (Ovando and Collier, 1985; a city in Michigan (Benavides, 1979); Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Guskin, 1981); Wilmington, Delaware (Waserstein, 1975); Rough Rock, Arizona (Wabaunseem, 1977), and Washington, D.C. (Collier, 1980). Since the Lau v. Nichols (1974) Supreme Court decision, bilingual parent and community groups have increasingly taken their cases to court to force schools to implement educational programs more appropriate to the needs of their children. However, Ambert and Melendez (1985:257) point out that instituting lawsuits does not necessarily imply continuing parental involvement once the court order is issued, because educators again resume the leadership in the school program.

Parents as Teachers' Aides. Another form of parent participation has been through joining the system as professional educators. Many language-minority parents have been hired as teachers' aides in bilingual programs. With time these aides have pursued coursework to be fully certified and have thus joined the system and created their own small spheres of influences on decision-making.

Parent Advisory Councils. The Title VII Parent Advisory Councils mandated by the Bilingual Education Act were also designed to provide another form of parent participation. However, in analyses of the effectiveness of these advisory councils, most studies have shown that they have little decision-making power, but operate at the lowest levels of citizen participation, placation and sanctions (Cruz, 1979; Matute-Bianchi, 1979; Rodriguez, 1979). The main function parent advisory councils seem to serve is to improve or change parent behavior rather than to allow parents to improve or change the educational program (Rodriquez, 1979). Rarely do parent advisory councils operate at the most powerful levels of parent participation: serving as checks and balances for the school system and as change agents.

Parent Leadership Training Institutes. Another strategy some school districts have taken is to provide parent leadership training institutes such as those in Chicago (Cerda and Schensul, 1979) and California (Ogbu, 1978). The Chicago project developed and trained parent advisory councils, helped parents move into elected positions, provided teacher in-service training on community relations, and disseminated information to parents. The California training combined minority and majority parents and educational staff from many school systems to discuss and resolve issues of common concern in schools and to develop mutual cross-cultural understanding.

Parent Education. This type of training is very effective with upwardly-mobile language-minority parents who have some formal educational background and potential leadership skills. However, there are many language-minority parents who need parent training that includes instruction for their own educational development. York (1979) describes parent participation in a Mississippi Choctaw bilingual program which incorporated parental decision making combined with use of parent resources and development of parents' literacy skills. Choctaw parents participated in program decisions, clarified conflicting values and goals, and helped develop instructional materials. At the same time they participated in Choctaw literacy programs and organized a writer's workshop to create Choctaw literature based on oral traditions.

Title VII parent education funds have supported evening and weekend courses for parents to develop ESL, literacy, and math skills for those parents who have not had the opportunity to receive a formal education. Some programs have modeled skill building through curricular materials designed for parents to work with their children and learn together at home (Cervantes, Baca and Torres, 1979).

Parent education is even more effective, however, when developed in the form of problem-posing dialogues between parents and educators, who are considered an equal partnership. The model of second language and literacy training developed by Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, is powerful in its consciousness raising and development of leadership skills. As Wallerstein (1983a:191) explains:

> Freire encouraged people to view themselves as active creators of culture, not passive recipients of history. He believed people

> create and recreate their culture as they earn a living, pass on values, and interact in social groups. By encouraging students to believe in themselves as agents of change (p. 191).

In developing curricula for parent education, it is valuable to adopt some of Wallerstein's (1983a; 1983b) interpretations of Freire's approach for a U.S. context. Three stages of the approach involve serious listening to students (through observation similar to that of an anthropolgist and participation in community life); dialogue (in which students and teachers become equals as they share personal needs, hopes, concerns, and develop mutual understanding); and critical thinking and action (e.g., parents' rights, ways to improve the environment, access to upward mobility and a decent life). Through basic classes in literacy, math skills, and ESL using Freire's approach, parents and teachers can join in a partnership that leads to greater parental leadership and participation in the decision-making process in schools.

Integrated Minority-Majority Parent Involvement. We have discussed models of parent involvement in which language-minority parents have become vocal advocates of change or have been empowered with new skills to become more effective participants in the schooling process. We also have to address ways to integrate minority and majority parents' concerns in a cross-cultural context. Usually in a majority-minority parent context, even with the best of intentions, majority parents ultimately dominate power decisions, if the school staff allow any parental decision-making to take place. sometimes serious conflicts can occur between majority and minority parents' wishes. Frequently minority parents withdraw in frustration or they leave the decisions to those who have had more formal education or those who speak English well and can articulate their concerns.

Parent training may ease the process and help minority parents to participate more effectively. Even more effective have been those few programs where minority and majority parents are placed on an equal status, in two-way and immersion bilingual schools. Two-way bilingual schools, using two languages of instruction, effectively integrate majority and minority students and parents with common goals. Students must learn each other's language and experience the other's culture through a bilingual curriculum, and parents learn to function in a bicultural context in the school. Both languages and cultures are valued in the school and each language is given 50 percent of the total academic time.

Immersion bilingual schools were first developed in Canada to provide instruction in French to speakers of the dominant language, English. A fairly typical early French immersion program provides all instruction in the second language, French, for kindergarten and first grade. English language arts is introduced beginning in second grade. By fourth grade, half of the academic curriculum is taught in French and half in English.

This model has been adopted in some 30 U.S. public schools and is becoming increasingly popular. In the U.S., immersion schools where the language taught is the native language of language-minority students of that community, these students are invited to participate if they so choose. For language-minority students, the immersion school becomes a bilingual maintenance school, in which they receive their first two years of literacy instruction and basic school skills in their native language and then are gradually introduced to English until by fourth grade all students are receiving half their academic instruction in English and half in the other language. Immersion bilingual programs that are integrated, two-way schools have been extremely successful with majority and

minority student academic achievement, for students of both lower- and middle-class backgrounds, and of many ethnicities (Genesee, 1985).

Since both two-way and immersion bilingual schools are for all students and they are enrichment models, the stigma of compensatory educational programs is avoided. Majority and minority parents frequently become enthusiastic advocates for acquiring second languages and attend after-school classes to learn the second language along with their children (Forsythe, 1981). Parents of immersion programs have even started a new professional organization, Advocates for Language Learning, which is composed of equal numbers of both parents and professional educators.

Issues on majority and minority parent involvement in schools are complicated, and school personnel are reluctant to share their power in educational decision-making. But there are hopeful signs of increased language-minority parents' participation in the process of majority-minority parent-school cooperation. Let us all work for continuing empowerment of language-minority parents and for models of effective cross-cultural school-community educational settings.

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WHY PARENT TUTORS: CULTURAL REASONS

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The 1984 amendments to the Bilingual Education Act have provisions for funding a new program entitled "Family English Literacy." This program is based on the growing evidence that parent participation fosters student achievement, especially when parents recognize their role as "first teachers" and "learners."

Four projects are currently funded for the first of a three-year cycle in California, Colorado, Texas and New Jersey. This paper concentrates on a case study in the "Interagency Family English Literacy" (IFEL) project operated by a consortium in northern urban New Jersey in five cities: East Orange, Newark, New Brunswick, Perth Amboy and Trenton. Although adults from three minority languages (Haitian Creole, Portuguese and Spanish) are being served, the remarks in this presentation are limited to the Hispanic group because it is the largest of the three at the present, and the most familier culturally.

Dr. Luis Laosa presently at the Educational Testing Service in Princeton has addressed a component of the Family English Literacy Program, namely, the Home-School continuity concept. Based on studies of Hispanic and other parent-child interactions, he has proposed a developmental, socioculturally relativistic paradigm (Laosa, 1979). Social competence involves functional adaptations to specific environments. And insofar as different environments may have their own specific demands for functional adaptation, for a child to be successful in two different environments may depend on the degree of overlap of the demands of the environments.

Based on Dr. Laosa's studies of Chicano families, it is clear there is a strong association between parental schooling and home language use:

> ...schooling is a much better predictor of home language use than is occupational status. Parent-child interactions in the homes of the more highly schooled Chicano parents tended to take place more frequently in English than in Spanish."

These same studies also indicate that with the same educational level of the parents, child-initiated interaction in English occurred more often. This generational difference observed in several studies indicates an increase in the use of English by children over parents.

Data from the Adult Performance Level Study, conducted at the University of Texas in 1975, indicate that approximately 56 percent of Hispanic adults can be considered functionally illiterate compared to 47 percent of Blacks and 16 percent of Whites. According to these figures, quoted by the National Council of La Raza, over half of Hispanic adults lack sufficient English Literacy to function competently in our complex society. They cannot hold jobs requiring the ability to read; they cannot read and understand leases, contracts, and explanations of finance charges; they cannot decipher the poison warnings on household products or make sense out of the notes which come home from their children's school. They cannot read to their children.

Hispanic illiterates show similar traits exhibited by their English-language counterparts: poor self-image, the need to hide their inability to read and write as well as a persistent avoidance of the educational institutions which remind them of their early alienation from school through absenteeism or failure.

Hispanic illiterates show a cultural trait which particularly handicaps them. Most illiterate Hispanics -- even those who are American citizens such as Puerto Ricans -- originate from countries and cultures where education and instruction are viewed as functions of the educational institutions which are uniformally, centrally and hierarchically operated by professionals without democratically fostered parental participation. Education is viewed as something belonging to teachers who know best and who must be respected.

In addition, Laosa's studies of parent-child reading among Chicano and non-Hispanic White families seem to indicate that, with the same educational level, non-Hispanic White mothers tend to read more often to their children than Chicano mothers. This observation appears to support my contention that the Hispanic parents often do not see themselves in the role of "first teachers" of their children.

The Hispanic illiterate within the consortium of the New Jersey Family English Literacy project is likely to be a displaced homemaker, a single, female head of a household or the mother of LEP children. Because of their low educational and socioeconomic status, and poor urban environment, the children do so poorly in school to the point of being held back, and thus of becoming potential dropouts. By helping the parents to become literate and better role models for their children, we are working towards the time when these parents will feel more comfortable in assuming the "first teacher" role for their offspring. The IFEL provides an opportunity to reach for such a goal.

It also stands to reason that in the process of literacy and within a cultural context, parent tutors can do a better, cheaper and more efficient job than professional tutors, or even educators. This belief is based on the "homophily principle" which asserts that effective communication occurs when the source and the receiver share common attributes such as beliefs, social status, culture, etc. This communication is also effective when the transfer of an idea from a source to a receiver results in an intended change in knowledge, attitude, or overt behavior on the part of the receiver. Interaction with those quite different involves more effort to make communication effective.

The principles of homophily of interaction, communication, consensus, and variation within specific situations best describe the underpinnings of the New Jersey Family Literacy project.

The New Jersey Family Literacy project aims at training parents, particularly displaced homemakers, to become parent tutors of Hispanic illiterate adults. By selecting displaced homemakers to be literacy tutors, the project has the following advantages:

Culturally, these Hispanic females are viewed by other women as role models. The tutors, being displaced homemakers themselves who have worked to overcome their low educational attainment, can go to illiterate women and through their behavior be an excellent example to other illiterates trying to become functionally literate. The illiterate can say, "If you did it, so can I". Moreover, tutoring requires a good amount of caring for the person being tutored. Tutoring involves a great deal of the motherly care that Hispanic females have

lavished on their children. In our project, tutoring is comparable to the culturally Hispanic function described as "compadrazgo". In Latin countries, parents of a newborn choose its godparents from among close friends. Being a "compadre" or "comadre" amounts to establishing family ties almost equal to those existing among blood relatives. Experience demonstrates that the tutor-tutee relationship is a bond similar to those among "compadres."

Psychologically, for the tutor to assist the tutee to overcome her feelings of low self-esteem, defeatism and lack of motivation, it is paramount that tutoring reflect a high degree of empathy. Before any language instruction can take place, the tutor needs to show an understanding of the illiterate's problems, her willingness to offer supportive peer counseling and her being available to the friend in need. This tutor-tutee empathy can be better achieved among culturally close individuals who not only have the same language background, but who preferably live in the same "barrio," or the emotional environment, that can help achieve mutual empathy.

Programmatically, the Family English Literacy project is aimed at language development, preferably in the home setting. Since the goal is to promote language proficiency among parents and children in the home, communication issues that arise between parents and children are also dealt with. So it is important that tutors be parents who have had experience and training in parenting, at least to the point of being good listeners. They are also supposed to assist families in need of help by referring them to the appropriate agency.

Because parents and children belong to two different generations, somehow more strikingly diverse than previous ones, i.e., grandparents and parents, clashes based on different cultural values frequently take place. Tutors need to help parents understand the consequences of a particular authoritarian style in a society that deals with children in ways that are more democratic than disciplinarian.

In practical terms, two major thrusts make up the rationale for tutor training programs: parents' self-image and the emphasis on learning.

An example of the first thrust is at Elementary School Number five in Perth Amboy, New Jersey where Mrs. Rose Lopez has been very successful in attracting parents into the school with "Parent Recognition Nights" when teachers honor the parents and entertain them with "veladas" (concerts, songs, dances, etc.). Mrs. Lopez also involved illiterate parents in learning by helping them feel successful through arts and crafts. Parents thus went from being an audience to leading roles which helps in their becoming 'first teachers" in their children's education. Other types of "self-image enhancing practices are those undertaken by Joan Davis of the Glendale Unified School District in California through the Project "Welcome".

The second thrust of emphasis on learning is a series of principles which are thoroughly incorporated into the tutors' frame of reference. They deal with subjects such as Learning Begins at Home; It's Time to Learn; Learning is Vital; Learning is Lifelong.

[Editor's Note: Dr. Oliva's presentation was based on 23 transparencies. Space did not allow us to use copies of these transparencies, and the paper has been revised to accommodate the reader.]

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Discussants: Ms. Mimi Lozano-Holzman, Title VII Project Coordinator, Huntington Beach Union High School District, Fountain Valley, California

Mr. Nga Duong, Title VII Project Coordinator, Seattle Public Schools, Seattle, Washington

Lozano-Holzman commented on the high percentage of Spanish speakers in many of the school systems. She addressed the specific problems that Mexican chldren have, particularly at the level of cultural expectations. She drew on her own experience and the misunderstandings that can arise from differences in the ways Anglos and Mexicans set goals, the strengths of each and the necessity to emphasize the cultural strengths of the minority group.

She also pointed out that the mistake most service providers make initially, is to assum that the needs of all minortiy LEP children can be solved in the same ways.

Duong also emphasized the necessity to account for different experiences and different backgrounds. For example, he pointed out that just because students are Indochinese does not necessarily mean they have the same experiences and needs. The universal issue is that solutions should be sought for individual situations.